



Kentucky Department of Education

School Councils and the Achievement Gap

Three-hour training for experienced school-based decision making membership.

Facilitator Guide

| Objectives | Estimated Time |
|--|----------------|
| Welcome | 10 minutes |
| Introductions and defining achievement gap | 30 minutes |
| Gap and accountability | 35 minutes |
| Break | 15 minutes |
| Determining gap interventions | 45 minutes |
| Improvement student achievement through policy development | 30 minutes |
| Closing and evaluations | 15 minutes |

This module is designed for participants to use their specific school report card data. Therefore, it is recommended that participants have access or bring their own device. School Report Cards can be accessed on smartphones and tablets.

Materials Needed

- School Councils and the Achievement Gap Booklet – one for each participant
- School Councils and the Achievement Gap Resource Guide – one for each participant
- Individual name tags or table tents – one for each participant
- computer for PowerPoint presentation
- Internet connectivity
- easel (optional)
- sticky notes (optional)
- Highlighters (optional)
- chart paper (optional)

- markers (optional)

Welcome and Introductions

Welcome each participant. If working with school council members from multiple school councils, ensure that schools are sitting together. Review the materials that are provided. Distribute highlighters and sticky notes (if providing). Encourage each to participate fully and to ask questions. Create a “parking lot” for questions. Review the training booklets provided to each participant. Review the session objectives.

Session Overview and Student Achievement

Ask participants to describe the main purpose of any school council. Read the student achievement paragraph, emphasizing the main focus of the school council being student achievement.

As an introduction, read (or summarize) the introductory paragraph. Closing the achievement gap can be at times cliquish or known as a “buzz-word”. But what does it mean? What does this entail for a school? Have participants understand that Kentucky does have a statute (law) requiring that all students, regardless of “label,” learn at high levels and that it is the school’s responsibility to provide quality instruction. Remind participants that this is in the SBDM statute and the school council’s responsibility to set the environment for this high quality learning.

Complete a name tag activity. Give each participant a blank name tag (or table tent). Have them think of an interest or something they are good at or enjoy doing to write on the tag. Examples: *Judy the artist*; *Steve the fisherman*; *James the problem-solver*; *Ashlie the runner*; *Tasha the organizer*.....

Once everyone has his or her name tag completed, have each person introduce themselves, say their role on the school council and why they chose the characteristic. Thank each for attending. Show that each participant (like each student in their school) brings unique characteristics and ability to the table.

What is an achievement gap?

Have participants find the achievement gap statute (KRS 158.649) in the resource book. The first section is the definition for achievement gap. As a group, look at each part of the section, having participants write the definition in their own words. Review the definition as a whole.

As the facilitator, note that male and female is a Kentucky characteristic and is not tied to federal requirements.

Also, note that not all schools will show scores in each group due to small student population. However, the activities and plans made to close gaps should be applicable even if the school has only one student in a subgroup. Remind participants they are to think of proficiency for all students as that one student will reflect in the overall score.

Sample responses are shown on the chart below. However, any applicable thoughts are acceptable. As facilitator, guide the discussion toward the best definition based on the group.


| | |
|---|--|
| | "Achievement gap" means a substantive performance difference on each of the tested areas by grade level of the state assessment program between the various groups of students including male and female students; students with and without disabilities; students with and without English proficiency; minority and non-minority students; and students who are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch and those who are not eligible for free and reduced-price lunch. [KRS 158.649(1)] |
| Substantive performance difference | The differences in achievement from one group of students to another are great enough that it is obvious. |
| Each of the tested areas by grade level of the state assessment program | The areas tested are English-language arts (including reading, writing, language mechanics); mathematics, science (even though not included yet in the assessment score) and social studies. Assessments are completed at every grade from third to eighth and then EOC at the high school level (as well as ACT prompts). |
| Between the various groups of students ... | Different groups are compared to all students. Those include male and female; students with and without a disability; students proficient in English and those who are not; students in an identified minority group and non-minority group; and those who qualify for free and reduced-price meals and those who do not. |

What is the school council's role in closing achievement gaps?

Read through the section of the statute. Have participants find the section in their resource book (highlight or underline for emphasis). Explain that the Oct. 1 date is set in statute. Unlike other dates that may change from year to year, this date cannot. Some may have questions on why this report is due several months earlier than the revised CSIP.

Discuss the six areas that are to be included as part of school improvement plan. Help participants understand the concept of neighborhoods (especially rural areas). Use television or movie analogies as needed. The chart can be completed as a whole or by tables. Remember to share ideas and have participants add to their charts.

Sample responses are shown on the chart on the next page. However, any applicable thoughts will be acceptable. As facilitator, guide the discussion toward the best definition based on the group.

| | |
|---|---|
|  | <p>Curriculum alignment within the school and with schools that send or receive the school's students; Schools that send students to the next level (i.e., elementary to middle or middle to high) should be collaborating on the needs of the students and to ensure that all areas of the Kentucky Academic Standards are covered adequately to prepare students.</p> |
| | <p>Evaluation and assessment strategies to continuously monitor and modify instruction to meet student needs and support proficient student work; Strategies and activities in the plan should be evaluated several times annually for effectiveness. This evaluation should be based on student data.</p> |
| <p>Professional development to address the goals of the plan; Staff professional learning should be intertwined among the activities in the improvement plan. Professional development should not consist of stand-alone programs with no connection to improvement strategies.</p> | |
| <p>Parental communication and involvement; Parents (families) should be considered partners in the education process. Engaging two-way communications should be intertwined in the improvement plan.</p> | |
| <p>Attendance improvement and dropout prevention; and Noting the importance of non-academic indicators in the plan will strengthen the plan. These include attendance and dropout prevention measures, as well as behavior and staff attendance.</p> | |
| <p>Technical assistance that will be accessed. The plan should provide for district and partner technical assistance measures. These measures should be evaluated for effectiveness.</p> | |

Gap and Accountability

Assist participants in understanding the purpose for Unbridled Learning, Kentucky's accountability model. Remind them that all of the results for Unbridled Learning can be found on the Kentucky Department of Education webpage.

If participants have a device, assist them in locating their school's report card profile page. If they do not have a device, you can do this whole group with the state's report card projected or use the pages located in the resource book.

Once they have a profile page, direct participants to the “Delivery Targets” tab and then to the “Proficiency/Gap” tab. The chart below contains data from the state report card for combined reading and mathematics (elementary school) and can be used as a sample.

Many schools may have made their delivery target in some areas. Therefore, the gap will be a negative number. Remind participants that this is fine. It shows how much over the target they are.

If participants need assistance with the subtraction, remind them that most devices have a built-in calculator.

Content: Combined Reading and Mathematics

Level: Elementary

| | Actual Score 2014-15 | Delivery Target 2015-16 | Gap between all students and ... |
|--|-------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| All Students | 51.5 | 52.7 | 1.2 |
| | | | |
| Male students | 49.7 | 51.4 | 1.7 |
| Female students | 53.4 | 54.0 | 0.6 |
| | | | |
| White (non-Hispanic) students | 54.8 | 55.5 | 0.7 |
| African-American students | 31.6 | 35.0 | 3.4 |
| Hispanic students | 39.5 | 42.8 | 3.3 |
| Asian students | 69.2 | 70.3 | 1.1 |
| | | | |
| Limited English proficiency (LEP) students | 23.7 | 30.9 | 7..2 |
| | | | |
| Free/reduced-price meals (F/R) students | 41.4 | 43.1 | 1.7 |
| | | | |
| Students with disabilities | 28.5 | 33.8 | 5.3 |
| | | | |
| Non-duplicated gap group | 41.7 | 43.6 | 1.9 |
| | | | |

Read through the bullets from Sonia Nieto’s work. Elaborate as needed, based on your participants. Have participants review the data and complete the reflection.

Break – 15 minutes

Determining Interventions

Welcome participants back.

Have participants reopen their browsers and find their school’s report card profile page. Tell participants they will now be looking at specific data relating to the number of students that scored proficient and distinguished in a particular subject or content area.

Have participants click on the “Assessment” tab. As facilitator, you can predetermine the subject/content area or you can allow participants to choose. Have participants look at their school report card (or state card). They will need to choose a subject – reading, mathematics, social studies, writing, language mechanics – or at the high school level, they will need to pick an EOC – English II, Algebra II, U.S. history or biology. Encourage participants to go with reading first and then math (if possible), since the gap activity focused on the combined reading/math data. The sample below is for K-PREP – Reading – Elementary School.

Subject: Reading

| | Novice | Proficient – Distinguished | Difference |
|--|--------|----------------------------|------------|
| All students | 19.6 | 54.2 | 32.6 |
| | | | |
| Male students | 22.0 | 51.1 | 29.1 |
| Female students | 17.1 | 57.4 | 40.3 |
| | | | |
| White (non-Hispanic) students | 16.7 | 57.8 | 41.1 |
| African-American students | 37.5 | 32.7 | -4.8 |
| Hispanic students | 27.0 | 41.2 | 14.2 |
| Asian students | 14.0 | 66.9 | 52.9 |
| | | | |
| Limited English proficiency (LEP) students | 41.3 | 23.2 | -18.1 |
| | | | |
| Free/reduced-price meals (F/R) students | 25.9 | 44.1 | 18.2 |

| | Novice | Proficient – Distinguished | Difference |
|----------------------------|--------|----------------------------|------------|
| Students with disabilities | 39.0 | 32.1 | -6.9 |
| Non-duplicated gap group | 25.6 | 44.5 | 18.9 |

After the activity is complete, remind participants that the difference is not the main issue; the number of novice students is. If they have a negative number, this is a red flag as an area where students are not achieving. In the sample, this is shown above with African-American students, students with limited English proficiency and students with disabilities.

The larger the positive number is, the more students are proficient. You can see this with female students, white (non-Hispanic) students, and Asian students.

Have participants think through this for a second. Depending on the group, you may want to share with a partner or at a table.

Read through the text from former Kentucky Education Commissioner Terry Holliday's blog. It is lengthy, so you may want participants to read silently, do round-robin, or as facilitator read aloud. As needed, rephrase or elaborate.

Once completed, have participants think back to the two data charts. How do they compare? Below is the comparison for the charts noted in this facilitator guide for elementary schools:

| | |
|---|--|
| What gap group is the largest? | Limited English proficiency and students with disabilities |
| What group has the largest number of novice students? | African-American students, students with limited English proficiency and students with disabilities. |
| How do these compare? | Both show LEP and students with disabilities |

After participants note their largest gap group(s) and the group(s) with the largest novice students (both should be comparable based on the way the scores are calculated – the exercise is more of a way to show non-educators the correlation) have them start formulating a novice reduction goal. The sample below is based on the data from above:

Reduce novice scores in reading (subject/content area) by 10 percent by 2019 (date).
[2019 is chosen as it correlates with the delivery targets tab.]

Improving Student Achievement Through Policy

Have participants reflect back to their main goal – to provide an environment to improve student achievement. Tell participants that now they have briefly looked at some data and thought about specific groups that are not achieving at top potential, and now it is time to look at a specific way that school councils can affect student achievement.

Review the policy basics. Elaborate as needed. Have participants look at the instructional practices policy. Working as a pair (or grouping), evaluate the policy based on the policy basics. Share out. As a note for the facilitator: The policy is very poor. Sample responses are shown on the chart below. However, any applicable thoughts will be acceptable. As facilitator, guide the discussion toward strengthening the policy and focusing on how instruction directly affects student achievement. A more applicable and complete sample instructional practices policy is in the resource book.

| | |
|--|--|
| Instructional Practices Policy Purpose: The Instructional Practices Policy of Wildcat Middle School ensures that all instructional practices align with the districtwide curriculum maps. Procedures: Instructional practices shall be defined as the strategies, techniques and activities used by the classroom teacher to engage students in the learning process. Homework is to be used to extend the student's opportunity to learn. Evaluation: Professional Learning Community Team Leads will collect the data and bring to monthly Leadership meeting. | <p>The policy does not include any best practices. It leaves those up to the teacher or staff member.</p> <p>The instructional practices, based on this policy, cannot be evaluated on consistency, as the policy is vague on what would constitute an appropriate instructional practice.</p> <p>What data is to be collected? This data is not identified.</p> |
|--|--|

Have participants complete the reflection. While they are completing the reflection and pondering any final thoughts, give each participant an evaluation to complete and an EILA certificate. Thank participants for their attendance and attention.